

## PATENT ABSTRACTS OF JAPAN

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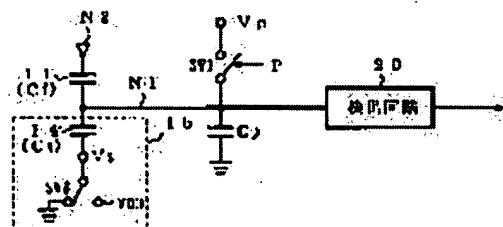
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## (54) SENSOR CIRCUIT FOR RECOGNIZING SURFACE SHAPE

## (57)Abstract:

PROBLEM TO BE SOLVED: To improve the detection accuracy of a sensor circuit for recognizing surface shape.

SOLUTION: A sensor circuit for recognizing surface shape is constituted of a capacitance sensor element 11 the capacitance of which changes in accordance with the surface shape, such as the irregularities, etc., of the fingerprint of a finger, a signal generating circuit 15 which generates the voltage signal corresponding to the capacitance of the element 11, and a detection circuit 20 which detects the voltage signal of a node N1 which is the junction between the element 11 and circuit 15. The signal generating circuit 15 is constituted of a capacitive element 14 having a capacitance value  $C_s$ . The first terminal of the element 14 is connected to the node N1 and the voltage at the second terminal of the capacitive element 14 is set at a first potential. After the node N1 is charged with charges, in addition, the charges in the node N1 are extracted by changing the voltage at the second terminal of the capacitive element 14 to a second potential.



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CLAIMS

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## [Claim(s)]

[Claim 1] The capacity sensor component from which capacity changes according to the shape of surface type of the object which contacted, The signal generating circuit which it connects [ signal generating circuit ] with said capacity sensor component, and generates the voltage signal according to the capacity of this capacity sensor component, It consists of a detector which is connected at the joint which shows the node of said capacity sensor component and signal generating circuit, and detects the voltage signal of said joint. In the sensor circuit for surface type-like recognition which said detector detects the voltage signal of said joint after a charge is charged at said joint, and is outputted said signal generating circuit While having the 1st and 2nd terminals, said 1st terminal consists of a capacitive element which has the capacity value  $C_s$  connected at said joint. Said signal generating circuit The sensor circuit for surface type-like recognition characterized by changing said 2nd terminal to the 2nd potential, and generating said voltage signal from said capacitive element after a charge is charged at said joint while setting the electrical potential difference of the 2nd terminal of said capacitive element as the 1st potential.

[Claim 2] It is the sensor circuit for surface type-like recognition characterized by the thing by which said 1st potential is set in claim 1 to either the power-source potential of the sensor circuit for surface type-like recognition, and ground potential, and for which said 2nd potential is set [ both ] as any of said power-source potential and ground potential, or another side.

[Claim 3] It is the sensor circuit for surface type-like recognition characterized by said capacitive element consisting of a semiconductor device in claim 1 or claim 2.

[Claim 4] It is the sensor circuit for surface type-like recognition characterized by for said semiconductor device consisting of an MOS transistor in claim 3, for the gate terminal of said MOS transistor turning into said 1st terminal, and the source terminal and drain terminal of said MOS transistor turning into said 2nd terminal.

[Claim 5] It is the sensor circuit for surface type-like recognition characterized by setting the capacity value  $C_s$  of said capacitive element as  $\{(C_{fv}+C_p)(C_{fr}+C_p)\}^{1/2}$  when the capacity value the greatest [ of  $C_p$  and said capacity sensor component ] and minimum is set to  $C_{fv}C_{fr}$  for the parasitism capacity value generated for the 1st terminal of said capacitive element in which claim of claim 1 thru/or claim 4, respectively.

[Claim 6] It is the sensor circuit for surface type-like recognition characterized by setting the capacity value  $C_s$  of said capacitive element below to the maximum of the capacity value of said capacity sensor component in which claim of claim 1 thru/or claim 4.

[Claim 7] It is the sensor circuit for surface type-like recognition characterized by the capacity value  $C_s$  of said capacitive element having the range from 10fF to 250fF(s) in which claim of claim 1 thru/or claim 4.

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## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

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### [Detailed Description of the Invention]

[0001]

[Field of the Invention] This invention relates to the sensor circuit for surface type-like recognition which detects the shape of surface type which has detailed irregularity, such as human being's fingerprint and a muzzle pattern of an animal.

[0002]

[Description of the Prior Art] As a sensor which recognizes the shape of surface type which has detailed irregularity, what used especially fingerprint detection as the target is reported. Moreover, the sensor of a capacity detection form using the LSI manufacturing technology as a technique of detecting the pattern of a fingerprint is proposed. This is for example, 'ISSCC. DIGEST OF TECHNICAL PAPERS' FEBRUARY 1998 It is indicated by pp.284-285. As shown in drawing 9, each sense unit 1 is constituted on the LSI chip as a sensor array 2 by which two-dimensional array was carried out, and the sensor of a capacity detection form detects the electrostatic capacity formed between the electrode of each sense unit 1, and the skin of the finger 3 touched through the insulator layer, and senses the concavo-convex pattern of a fingerprint. Since the values of the capacity formed of the irregularity of a fingerprint differ, the irregularity of a fingerprint can be sensed by detecting this very small capacity difference.

[0003] Drawing 7 is the block diagram showing the basic configuration of the conventional sensor circuit which used this principle. Namely, this sensor circuit for surface type-like recognition The capacity sensor component 11 which has the capacity value  $C_f$  formed between the electrode of the sense unit 1, and the skin of the finger touched through the insulator layer, The signal generating circuit 13 which consists of the switch SW2 and current source 12 which generate the voltage signal according to the capacity value  $C_f$  of the capacity sensor component 11, It consists of a detector 20 which detects the voltage signal by the signal generating circuit 13, and a switch SW1 for supplying outer potential \*\*\*\* to the joint N1 which is a node of the electrode of the capacity sensor component 11, and a signal generating circuit 13. In addition,  $C_p$  in drawing shows parasitic capacitance. 1 set of sense units 1 are constituted by such a capacity sensor component 11, a signal generating circuit 13, and detector 20 grade.

[0004] Since the value  $C_f$  of the capacity sensor component 11 is decided by distance of the sensor electrode (namely, electrode of the sensor component 11 connected to the joint N1 side of drawing 7) of this capacity sensor component 11, and the skin of a finger, the value  $C_f$  of the capacity sensor component 11 changes with irregularity of a fingerprint here. Therefore, if a finger 3 touches the location equivalent to the joint N2 of drawing 7, the voltage signal according to the irregularity of a fingerprint will be outputted to a joint N1 side. This voltage signal will be detected as a signal which reflected the irregularity of a fingerprint by the detector 20, consequently a fingerprint pattern will be detected.

[0005] Drawing 8 is a timing chart for explaining actuation of the sensor circuit for surface type-like recognition shown in drawing 7. First, the control signal P which controls closing motion of a switch

SW1 serves as Low level ( drawing 8 (a)). Moreover, the control signal S which controls closing motion of a switch SW2 serves as Low level ( drawing 8 (b)). Therefore, each switches SW1 and SW2 are in the open condition. At this time, the joint N1 serves as potential below outer potential \*\*\*\* ( drawing 8 (c)).

[0006] In such a condition, if a control signal P changes from Low level to High level by \*\* at the time of drawing 8 (a), a switch SW1 will close, and it will be in switch-on, consequently the potential of a joint N1 will be precharged at outer potential \*\*\*\* ( drawing 8 (c)).

[0007] After precharge is completed, as a control signal S shows drawing 8 (b), it changes to High level, at the same time it changes to Low level by \*\* the time of a control signal P being drawing 8 (a). By this, a switch SW1 will be in non-switch-on, a switch SW2 will be in switch-on, and the charge charged according to the current source 12 at the joint N1 is drawn out. Consequently, the potential of a joint N1 falls ( drawing 8 (c)). Here, if the High level period of a control signal S is set to  $\text{deltat}$ , it is potential fall  $\text{deltaV}$  of the joint N1 after  $\text{deltat}$  progress.  $\text{deltaV} = I \text{deltat} / (C_f + C_p)$  (1)

It comes to be alike. However, I is the current of a current source 12.

[0008] Here, since Current I, period  $\text{deltat}$ , and parasitic capacitance  $C_p$  are fixed respectively, potential fall  $\text{deltaV}$  is determined by capacity  $C_f$ . Since each sense unit 1 is decided by distance of the electrode of the capacity sensor component 11, and the skin of a finger, the value of capacity  $C_f$  changes with irregularity of a fingerprint. The magnitude of fall potential  $\text{deltaV}$  changes from this reflecting the irregularity of a fingerprint.

[0009] That is, if the value of the capacity sensor component 11 which is equivalent to the heights of  $C_{fv}$  and a fingerprint in the value of the capacity sensor component 11 equivalent to the crevice of a fingerprint is set to  $C_{fr}$ , difference  $\text{deltaVi}$  of the voltage signal of the crevice of a fingerprint and heights should be shown in drawing 8 (c).  $\text{deltaVi} = I \text{deltat} / (C_{fv} + C_p)$

-  $I \text{deltat} / (C_{fr} + C_p)$  (2)

It becomes. Since such signal  $\text{deltaVi}$  is given to a detector 20 as an input signal, in a detector 20, the signal which the irregularity of a fingerprint was identified and reflected the irregularity of a fingerprint can be outputted.

[0010]

[Problem(s) to be Solved by the Invention] The conventional sensor circuit shown in drawing 7 and drawing 8 is performing drawing of the charge of a joint N1 according to the current source 12. Since such a current source 12 was established for every sense unit, it needed to control to homogeneity the amount of currents of each current source in each sense unit, and the time amount which keeps lengthening a charge. However, there was a problem that it was difficult to produce all current sources to homogeneity in fact, and the detection precision of the whole sensor circuit which consists of each sense unit for this reason got worse. Therefore, this invention aims at raising the detection precision of the sensor circuit for surface type-like recognition.

[0011]

[Means for Solving the Problem] The capacity sensor component from which capacity changes according to the shape of surface type of the object with which this invention contacted in order to solve such a technical problem, The signal generating circuit which generates the voltage signal according to the capacity of a capacity sensor component, It consists of a detector which is connected at the joint which shows the node of a capacity sensor component and a signal generating circuit, and detects the voltage signal of said joint. A detector is a sensor circuit for surface type-like recognition which detects and outputs the voltage signal of said joint after a charge is charged at said joint. While constituting from a capacitive element which has the capacity value  $C_s$  to which the 1st terminal is connected in a signal generating circuit at said joint while having the 1st and 2nd terminals and setting the electrical potential difference of the 2nd terminal of a capacitive element as the 1st potential After a charge is charged at said joint, it characterizes by changing the 2nd terminal to the 2nd potential and having made it generate a voltage signal from a capacitive element. In this case, while the 1st potential is set to either the power-source potential of a sensor circuit, and ground potential, the 2nd potential is set as any of power-source potential and ground potential, or another side. Moreover, a capacitive element

consists of semiconductor devices. Moreover, the above-mentioned semiconductor device consists of MOS transistors, the gate terminal of an MOS transistor turns into the 1st terminal in this case, and the source terminal and drain terminal of an MOS transistor turn into the 2nd terminal. Moreover, when the capacity value the greatest [ of  $C_p$  and a capacity sensor component ] and minimum is set to  $C_{fv}C_{fr}$  for the parasitism capacity value generated for the 1st terminal of a capacitive element, respectively, the capacity value  $C_s$  of a capacitive element is set as  $\{(C_{fv}+C_p)(C_{fr}+C_p)\}^{1/2}$ . Moreover, the capacity value  $C_s$  of a capacitive element is set below to the maximum of the capacity value of a capacity sensor component. Moreover, the capacity value  $C_s$  of a capacitive element has the range from 10fF to 250fF(s).

[0012]

[Embodiment of the Invention] Hereafter, this invention is explained with reference to a drawing.

Drawing 1 is the block diagram of the sensor circuit for surface type-like recognition concerning this invention. In drawing 1 this sensor circuit for surface type-like recognition The capacity sensor component 11 which has the value  $C_f$  formed between the electrode of the sense unit 1, and the skin of the finger touched through the insulator layer, The signal generating circuit 15 containing the drive capacitive element 14 which has the capacity value  $C_s$  which generates the voltage signal according to the capacity value  $C_f$  of the capacity sensor component 11, It consists of a detector 20 which detects the voltage signal by the signal generating circuit 15, and a switch SW1 for supplying outer potential \*\*\*\* to the joint N1 which is a node of the capacity sensor component 11 and a signal generating circuit 15. In addition,  $C_p$  in drawing shows parasitic capacitance. 1 set of sense units 1 are constituted by such a capacity sensor component 11, a signal generating circuit 15, and detector 20 grade.

[0013] Since the value  $C_f$  of the capacity sensor component 11 is decided by distance of the sensor electrode (namely, electrode of the sensor component 11 connected to the joint N1 side of drawing 1 ) of this capacity sensor component 11, and the skin of a finger, the value  $C_f$  of the capacity sensor component 11 changes with irregularity of a fingerprint here. Therefore, if a finger touches the location equivalent to the joint N2 of drawing 1 , the voltage signal according to the irregularity of a fingerprint will be outputted to a joint N1 side. This voltage signal is detected as a signal which reflected the irregularity of a fingerprint by the detector 20, consequently a fingerprint pattern is detected.

[0014] The amount of charges which the signal generating circuit 15 in the sensor circuit shown in drawing 1 is made to perform drawing of the charge of a joint N1 using the charge and discharge of the drive capacitive element 14, and is drawn out is controlled by the capacity  $C_s$  and driver voltage  $V_s$  of the drive capacitive element 14. Here, the amount of charges drawn out by setting the driver voltage  $V_s$  shown in drawing 1 as supply voltage level (VDD) or a grand level (GND) through a switch SW3 is controlled. The control based on the charge and discharge of the capacity value  $C_s$  of the drive capacitive element 14 has a precision higher than control by the current value of the conventional current source 12 shown in drawing 7 , and control of the driver voltage  $V_s$  of the drive capacitive element 14 is easy and highly precise compared with the conventional time control shown in drawing 8 , and can be controlled.

[0015] Next, the signal generation approach of the signal generating circuit 15 of drawing 1 is explained using drawing 2 . Here, the case where the front face of a finger is detected as the shape of surface type is explained. Potential of a control signal P is made into High level by \*\* at the time of drawing 2 (a), a switch SW1 is closed, and outer potential \*\*\*\* is precharged at a joint N1. Then, potential of a control signal P is made into Low level by \*\* at the time of drawing 2 (a), and a switch SW1 is opened. As shown in drawing 2 (b), only delta  $V_s$  reduces the driver voltage  $V_s$  of the drive capacitive element 14 in a signal generating circuit 15 to coincidence, the charge of a joint N1 is drawn out, and the input signal by the side of a detector 20 is produced.

[0016] Here, about precharge potential, if the value of \*\*\*\* and the capacity sensor component 11 is set to  $C_f$  and variation of the driver voltage  $V_s$  of  $C_s$  and the drive capacitive element 14 is set

[ parasitism capacity value ] to delta  $V_s$  for the capacity value of  $C_p$  and the drive capacitive element 14, variation delta  $V$  of the input signal given to a detector 20 side will become like a formula (3).

$$\Delta V = \Delta V_s / \{1 + (C_f + C_p) / C_s\} \quad (3)$$

[0017] Moreover, dynamic range  $\Delta V_i$  of this signal variation is as follows.

$$\Delta V_i = \Delta V_{MAX} - \Delta V_{MIN} = \Delta V_s / \{1 + (C_{fv} + C_p) / C_s\}$$

$$- \Delta V_s / \{1 + (C_{fr} + C_p) / C_s\} \quad (4)$$

The capacity value with which  $C_{fv}$  in a formula (4) is equivalent to the crevice of a fingerprint among the capacity  $C_f$  of the capacity sensor component 11, and  $C_{fr}$  show the capacity value which is equivalent to the heights of a fingerprint among the capacity  $C_f$  of the capacity sensor component 11.

[0018] A semiconductor device can also realize the drive capacitive element 14, and as shown especially in drawing 3 (b), an MOS transistor can be used as a drive capacity of drawing 3 (a). What is necessary is just to make it a PMOS transistor used for it although drawing 3 (b) is the example of an NMOS transistor, when the polarities of the supply voltage of a sensor circuit differ. Furthermore, the gate terminal of an MOS transistor is connected to the capacity sensor component 11, and the drive capacitive element 14 by which the parasitic capacitance of the source terminal of an MOS transistor and a drain terminal is not connected to the capacity sensor component 11 can be realized by controlling the electrical potential difference of a source terminal and a drain terminal.

[0019] It is so good that dynamic range  $\Delta V_i$  shown in a formula (4) is large since it serves as an input signal to a detector 20. The relation between parasitism capacity value  $C_p = 50\text{fF}$ ,  $C_{fv} = 10\text{fF}$ ,  $C_{fr} = 100\text{fF}$ , dynamic range  $\Delta V_i$  at the time of  $\Delta V_s = 2.7\text{V}$ , and the value  $C_s$  of the drive capacitive element 14 is shown in drawing 4 here.

[0020] In drawing 4, the value  $C_s$  of the drive capacitive element 14 from which dynamic range  $\Delta V_i$  serves as max exists, and the values  $C_s$  of the drive capacitive element 14 are about 95 fF(s) in this case. The value  $C_s$  of the drive capacitive element 14 that dynamic range  $\Delta V_i$  becomes max from the above-mentioned formula (4)  $C_s = \{(C_{fv} + C_p) (C_{fr} + C_p)\}^{1/2}$  (5)

What is necessary is to be at the \*\* time, to do in this way and just to select the value  $C_s$  of the drive capacitive element 14.

[0021] Here, the size of a sensor electrode is restricted from the pattern of a fingerprint, and the sensibility of a sensor circuit, and becomes 20um angles - 100um angle extent.  $C_{fr}$  at this time -- 20fF-350 -- fF and  $C_{fv}$  are set to 5 or less fFs, and  $C_p$  sets it 10fF(s) - 170fF extent. Since  $C_{fv}$  is small, it may fix with 5fF(s) and it may think, and the optimum value of the value  $C_s$  of the drive capacitive element 14 at the time of changing  $C_{fr}$  and  $C_p$  becomes like drawing 5. What is necessary is just to set the value  $C_s$  of the drive capacitive element 14 from the above thing below to the capacity  $C_{fv}$  of the crevice of a fingerprint.

[0022] Furthermore, by actual manufacture, you may consider  $C_p = C_{fv}/3$ , and  $C_{fv} = C_{fv}/20$ . In this case, the optimum value of the value  $C_s$  of the drive capacitive element 14 serves as about 0.7  $C_{fv}$ (s). This relation is shown in drawing 6. Therefore, the value  $C_s$  of the drive capacitive element 14 has about 0.7 optimal times of  $C_{fv}$ , and the range becomes 10fF(s) - 250fF extent from the range of above  $C_{fv}$ . thus, in order to perform drawing of the charge of a joint N1 using the charge and discharge of the drive capacitive element 14, without performing drawing of the charge by the current source, the time amount which builds a current source in many sense units, and draws out the amount of currents and charge is controlled with a sufficient precision by the signal generating circuit 15 -- like -- things become unnecessary, therefore the sensing precision of a sensor circuit can be improved with an easy configuration.

[0023]

[Effect of the Invention] The capacity sensor component from which capacity changes according to the shape of surface type of the object which contacted according to this invention as explained above, In the sensor circuit for surface type-like recognition equipped with the signal generating circuit which generates the voltage signal according to the capacity of a capacity sensor component, and the detector which is connected at the joint which is connection between a capacity sensor component and a signal generating circuit, and detects a voltage signal While constituting from a capacitive element which has the capacity value  $C_s$  to which the 1st terminal is connected in a signal generating circuit at said joint while having the 1st and 2nd terminals and setting the electrical potential difference of the 2nd terminal of a capacitive element as the 1st potential Since the 2nd terminal is changed to the 2nd potential and it

was made to generate a voltage signal from a capacitive element after the charge was charged at said joint. What controls the time amount which builds a current source in many sense units, and draws out the amount of currents and charge of each current source with a sufficient precision is avoided, therefore can improve the detection precision of a sensor circuit. Moreover, since the 2nd potential impressed to said 2nd terminal was set as any of power-source potential and ground potential, or another side while setting the 1st potential impressed to the 2nd terminal of a capacitive element at this time to either power-source potential and ground potential, when controlling the potential of the 2nd terminal, it can control by the easy configuration. Moreover, since the gate terminal of the MOS transistor which is the above-mentioned semiconductor device is used as the 1st terminal and it was made to use the source terminal and drain terminal of a transistor of a parenthesis as the 2nd terminal while constituting the capacitive element from a semiconductor device, an accurate capacitive element is producible. Moreover, since the capacity value  $C_s$  of a capacitive element was set as  $\{(C_{fv}+C_p)(C_{fr}+C_p)\}^{1/2}$  when the capacity value the greatest [ of  $C_p$  and a capacity sensor component ] and minimum was set to  $C_{fv}C_{fr}$  for the parasitism capacity value generated for the 1st terminal of a capacitive element, respectively, when detecting the irregularity of a fingerprint as the shape of surface type, the crevice and heights of a fingerprint can be identified exactly. Moreover, since the capacity value  $C_s$  of a capacitive element was set below to the maximum of the capacity of a capacity sensor component, the shape of surface type of the object which has detailed irregularity is detectable with a sufficient precision. Moreover, since capacity value  $C_s$  of a capacitive element was made into the range from 10fF(s) to 250fF(s), an accurate capacitive element can be manufactured easily.

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DESCRIPTION OF DRAWINGS

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[Brief Description of the Drawings]

[Drawing 1] It is the block diagram of the sensor circuit for surface type-like recognition concerning this invention.

[Drawing 2] It is the timing diagram which shows the situation of the sensor circuit of drawing 1 of operation.

[Drawing 3] It is drawing showing the example of the drive capacitive element in the signal generating circuit which constitutes the sensor circuit of drawing 1.

[Drawing 4] It is the property Fig. of the sensor circuit of drawing 1.

[Drawing 5] It is the property Fig. of the sensor circuit of drawing 1.

[Drawing 6] It is the property Fig. of the sensor circuit of drawing 1.

[Drawing 7] It is the block diagram of the conventional sensor circuit.

[Drawing 8] It is the timing diagram which shows the situation of the sensor circuit of drawing 7 of operation.

[Drawing 9] Each sense unit is drawing showing the sensor array formed in the shape of a grid.

[Description of Notations]

1 [ -- A capacity sensor component, 14 / -- A drive capacitive element, 15 / -- A signal generating circuit, 20 / -- A detector, SW1, SW3 / -- A switch, Cp / -- Parasitic capacitance, N1, N2 / -- A joint, \*\*\*\* / -- Foreign voltage. ] -- A sense unit, 2 -- A sensor array, 3 -- A finger, 11

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[Translation done.]

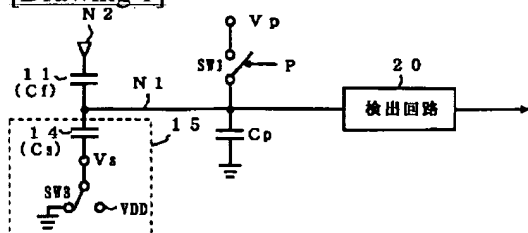
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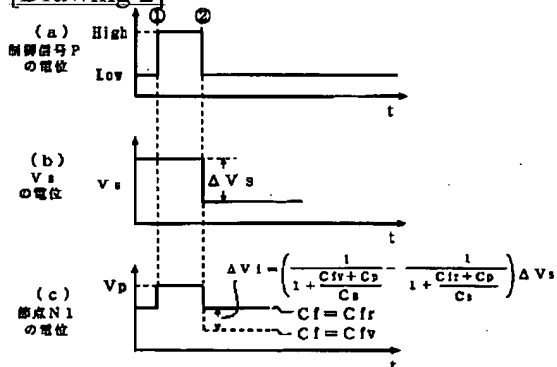
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## DRAWINGS

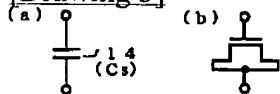
[Drawing 1]



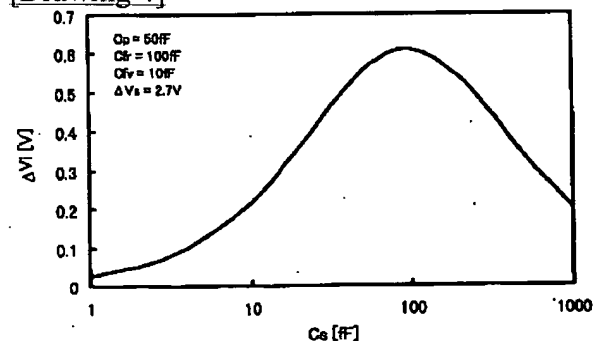
[Drawing 2]



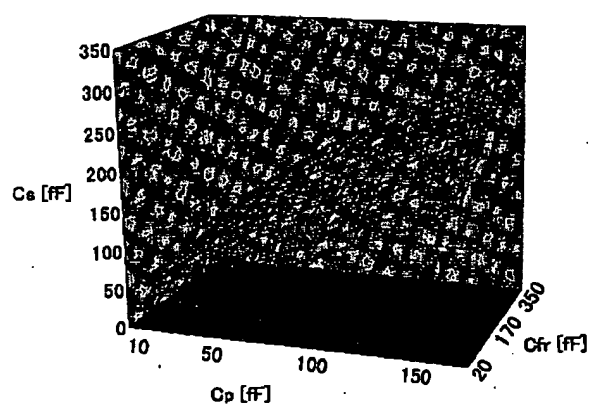
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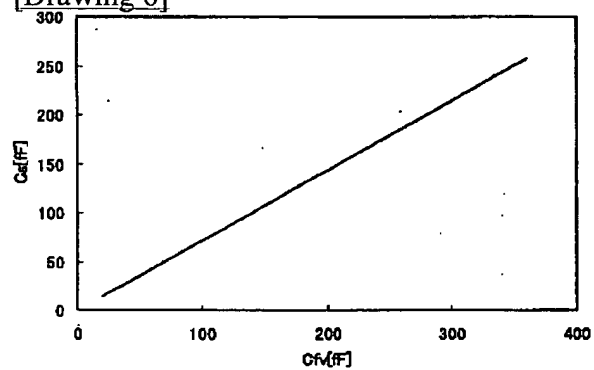
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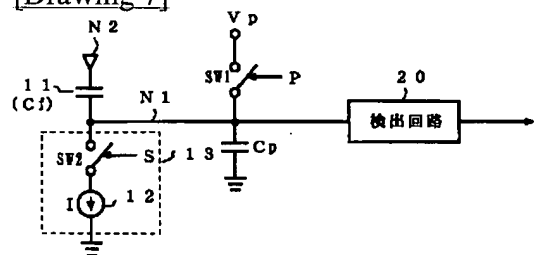
[Drawing 5]



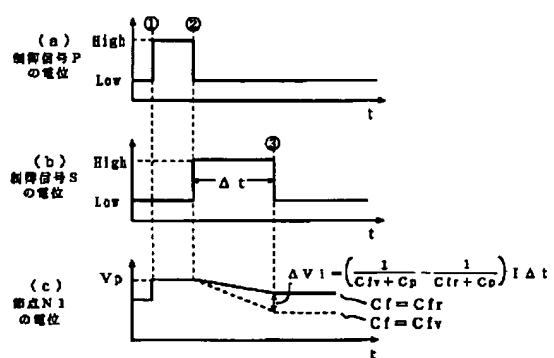
[Drawing 6]



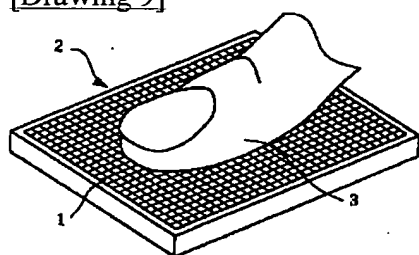
[Drawing 7]



[Drawing 8]



[Drawing 9]



[Translation done.]



(2)

## 【特許請求の範囲】

【請求項1】 接触した対象物の表面形状に応じて容量が変化する容量センサ素子と、前記容量センサ素子に接続されこの容量センサ素子の容量に応じた電圧信号を発生させる信号発生回路と、前記容量センサ素子と信号発生回路との接続点を示す節点に接続され前記節点の電圧信号を検出する検出回路とからなり、前記検出回路は前記節点に電荷が充電された後に前記節点の電圧信号を検出して出力する表面形状認識用センサ回路において、前記信号発生回路は、第1及び第2の端子を有するとともに前記第1の端子が前記節点に接続される容量値 $C_s$ を有する容量素子からなり、前記信号発生回路は、前記容量素子の第2の端子の電圧を第1の電位に設定するとともに、前記節点に電荷が充電された後に前記第2の端子を第2の電位に変化させて前記容量素子から前記電圧信号を発生させることを特徴とする表面形状認識用センサ回路。

【請求項2】 請求項1において、前記第1の電位は表面形状認識用センサ回路の電源電位及びグランド電位の何れか一方に設定されるとともに、前記第2の電位は前記電源電位及びグランド電位の何れか他方に設定されることを特徴とする表面形状認識用センサ回路。

【請求項3】 請求項1または請求項2において、前記容量素子は、半導体素子からなることを特徴とする表面形状認識用センサ回路。

【請求項4】 請求項3において、前記半導体素子はMOSトランジスタからなり、前記MOSトランジスタのゲート端子が前記第1の端子となり、前記MOSトランジスタのソース端子及びドレイン端子が前記第2の端子となることを特徴とする表面形状認識用センサ回路。

【請求項5】 請求項1ないし請求項4の何れかの請求項において、前記容量素子の第1の端子に発生する寄生容量値を $C_p$ 、前記容量センサ素子の最大及び最小の容量値をそれぞれ $C_{fv}$ 、 $C_{fr}$ としたとき前記容量素子の容量値 $C_s$ は、 $\{(C_{fv} + C_p)(C_{fr} + C_p)\}^{1/2}$ に設定されることを特徴とする表面形状認識用センサ回路。

【請求項6】 請求項1ないし請求項4の何れかの請求項において、前記容量素子の容量値 $C_s$ は、前記容量センサ素子の容量値の最大値以下に設定されることを特徴とする表面形状認識用センサ回路。

【請求項7】 請求項1ないし請求項4の何れかの請求項において、前記容量素子の容量値 $C_s$ は、10 fFから250 fFまでの範囲を有することを特徴とする表面形状認識用センサ回路。

## 【発明の詳細な説明】

## 【0001】

【発明の属する技術分野】本発明は、人間の指紋や動物の鼻紋等の微細な凹凸を有する表面形状を検出する表面形状認識用センサ回路に関する。

## 【0002】

【従来の技術】微細な凹凸を有する表面形状を認識するセンサとして、特に指紋検出をターゲットとしたものが報告されている。また、指紋のパターンを検出する技術として、LSI製造技術を用いた容量検出形のセンサが提案されている。これは例えば、'ISSCC DIGEST OF TECHNICAL PAPERS' FEBRUARY 1998 pp. 284~285に記載されている。容量検出形のセンサは、図9に示すように、各センスユニット1がLSIチップ上に2次元配列されたセンサアレイ2として構成されており、各センスユニット1の電極と絶縁膜を介して触れた指3の皮膚との間に形成される静電容量を検出して、指紋の凹凸パターンを感知するものである。指紋の凹凸により形成される容量の値が異なるため、この微小な容量差を検出することで指紋の凹凸を感知することができる。

【0003】図7は、この原理を用いた従来のセンサ回路の基本構成を示すブロック図である。すなわち、この表面形状認識用センサ回路は、センスユニット1の電極と絶縁膜を介して触れた指の皮膚との間に形成される容量値 $C_f$ を有する容量センサ素子11と、容量センサ素子11の容量値 $C_f$ に応じた電圧信号を発生するスイッチSW2及び電流源12からなる信号発生回路13と、信号発生回路13による電圧信号を検出する検出回路20と、外部電位 $V_p$ を容量センサ素子11の電極と信号発生回路13との接続点である節点N1に供給するためのスイッチSW1とからなる。なお、図中の $C_p$ は寄生容量を示す。このような容量センサ素子11、信号発生回路13、検出回路20等により1組のセンスユニット1が構成される。

【0004】ここで容量センサ素子11の値 $C_f$ は、この容量センサ素子11のセンサ電極（即ち、図7の節点N1側に接続されるセンサ素子11の電極）と指の皮膚との距離によって決まるため、指紋の凹凸によって容量センサ素子11の値 $C_f$ は異なる。したがって、指3が図7の節点N2に相当する位置に触れると、指紋の凹凸に応じた電圧信号が節点N1側に出力される。この電圧信号は検出回路20により指紋の凹凸を反映した信号として検出され、その結果、指紋パターンが検出されることになる。

【0005】図8は、図7に示した表面形状認識用センサ回路の動作を説明するためのタイミングチャートである。はじめに、スイッチSW1の開閉を制御する制御信号PはLowレベルとなっている（図8(a)）。また、スイッチSW2の開閉を制御する制御信号SもLowレベルとなっている（図8(b)）。したがって、各

(3)

3

スイッチSW1、SW2は開状態になっている。このとき、節点N1は外部電位V<sub>p</sub>以下の電位となっている(図8(c))。

【0006】このような状態において、図8(a)の時点①で制御信号PがLowレベルからHighレベルに変化すると、スイッチSW1が閉結して導通状態となり、その結果、節点N1の電位は外部電位V<sub>p</sub>にプリチャージされる(図8(c))。

【0007】プリチャージが終了した後、制御信号Pが \*  

$$\Delta V = I \Delta t / (C_f + C_p)$$
 になる。ただし、Iは電流源12の電流である。

【0008】ここで、電流I、期間Δt及び寄生容量C<sub>p</sub>はそれぞれ一定であるから、電位低下ΔVは容量C<sub>f</sub>によって決定される。各センスユニット1は容量センサ素子11の電極と指の皮膚との距離によって決まるので、指紋の凹凸によって容量C<sub>f</sub>の値は異なる。このこ ※

$$\Delta V_i = I \Delta t / (C_{fv} + C_p) - I \Delta t / (C_{fr} + C_p)$$

となる。このような信号ΔV<sub>i</sub>が入力信号として検出回路20に与えられるため、検出回路20では、指紋の凹凸が識別され指紋の凹凸を反映した信号を出力することができる。

【0010】

【発明が解決しようとする課題】図7及び図8に示す従来のセンサ回路は、電流源12により節点N1の電荷の引き抜きを行っている。こうした電流源12は各センスユニット毎に設けられているため、各センスユニット内の各電流源の電流量と電荷を引く抜く時間とを均一に制御する必要があった。しかしながら、実際には全ての電流源を均一に作製することは困難であり、このため各センスユニットからなるセンサ回路全体の検出精度が悪化するという問題があった。したがって本発明は、表面形状認識用センサ回路の検出精度を向上させることを目的とする。

【0011】

【課題を解決するための手段】このような課題を解決するために本発明は、接触した対象物の表面形状に応じて容量が変化する容量センサ素子と、容量センサ素子の容量に応じた電圧信号を発生させる信号発生回路と、容量センサ素子と信号発生回路との接続点を示す節点に接続され前記節点の電圧信号を検出する検出回路とからなり、検出回路は前記節点に電荷が充電された後に前記節点の電圧信号を検出して出力する表面形状認識用センサ回路であって、信号発生回路を、第1及び第2の端子を有するとともに第1の端子が前記節点に接続される容量値C<sub>s</sub>を有する容量素子から構成し、容量素子の第2の端子の電圧を第1の電位に設定するとともに、前記節点に電荷が充電された後に第2の端子を第2の電位に変化させて容量素子から電圧信号を発生させるようにしたことにより特徴づけられる。この場合、第1の電位はセン

4

\* 図8(a)の時点②でLowレベルに変化すると同時に制御信号Sが図8(b)に示すようにHighレベルに変化する。これによりスイッチSW1が非導通状態に、スイッチSW2が導通状態になり、電流源12により節点N1に充電された電荷が引き抜かれる。この結果、節点N1の電位が低下する(図8(c))。ここで、制御信号SのHighレベル期間をΔtとすると、Δt経過後の節点N1の電位低下ΔVは

(1)

※とから、指紋の凹凸を反映して低下電位ΔVの大きさが変化する。

【0009】即ち、指紋の凹部に相当する容量センサ素子11の値をC<sub>fv</sub>、指紋の凸部に相当する容量センサ素子11の値をC<sub>fr</sub>とすると、指紋の凹部と凸部の電圧信号の差ΔV<sub>i</sub>は、図8(c)に示すように、

(2)

サ回路の電源電位及びグランド電位の何れか一方に設定されるとともに、第2の電位は電源電位及びグランド電位の何れか他方に設定される。また、容量素子は、半導体素子から構成されるものである。また、上記半導体素子はMOSトランジスタから構成され、この場合、MOSトランジスタのゲート端子が第1の端子となり、MOSトランジスタのソース端子及びドレイン端子が第2の端子となる。また、容量素子の第1の端子に発生する寄生容量値をC<sub>p</sub>、容量センサ素子の最大及び最小の容量値をそれぞれC<sub>fv</sub>、C<sub>fr</sub>としたとき容量素子の容量値C<sub>s</sub>は、{(C<sub>fv</sub>+C<sub>p</sub>)(C<sub>fr</sub>+C<sub>p</sub>)}<sup>1/2</sup>に設定されるものである。また、容量素子の容量値C<sub>s</sub>は、容量センサ素子の容量値の最大値以下に設定されるものである。また、容量素子の容量値C<sub>s</sub>は、10fFから250fFまでの範囲を有するものである。

【0012】

【発明の実施の形態】以下、本発明について図面を参照して説明する。図1は本発明に係る表面形状認識用センサ回路のブロック図である。図1において、この表面形状認識用センサ回路は、センスユニット1の電極と絶縁膜を介して触れた指の皮膚との間に形成される値C<sub>f</sub>を有する容量センサ素子11と、容量センサ素子11の容量値C<sub>f</sub>に応じた電圧信号を発生する容量値C<sub>s</sub>を有する駆動容量素子14を含む信号発生回路15と、信号発生回路15による電圧信号を検出する検出回路20と、外部電位V<sub>p</sub>を容量センサ素子11と信号発生回路15との接続点である節点N1に供給するためのスイッチSW1とからなる。なお、図中のC<sub>p</sub>は寄生容量を示す。このような容量センサ素子11、信号発生回路15、検出回路20等により1組のセンスユニット1が構成される。

50 【0013】ここで容量センサ素子11の値C<sub>f</sub>は、こ

(4)

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の容量センサ素子11のセンサ電極（即ち、図1の節点N1側に接続されるセンサ素子11の電極）と指の皮膚との距離によって決まるため、指紋の凹凸によって容量センサ素子11の値Cfは異なる。したがって、指が図1の節点N2に相当する位置に触れると、指紋の凹凸に応じた電圧信号が節点N1側に出力される。この電圧信号は検出回路20により指紋の凹凸を反映した信号として検出され、その結果、指紋パターンが検出される。

【0014】図1に示すセンサ回路内の信号発生回路15は、節点N1の電荷の引き抜きを駆動容量素子14の充放電を用いて行うようにしたものであり、引き抜く電荷量は駆動容量素子14の容量Csとその駆動電圧Vsにより制御される。ここで、図1に示す駆動電圧Vsを、スイッチSW3を介して例えば電源電圧レベル（VDD）またはグラウンドレベル（GND）に設定することにより引き抜く電荷量を制御する。駆動容量素子14の容量値Csの充放電に基づく制御は、図7に示した従来の電流源12の電流値による制御よりも精度が高く、また駆動容量素子14の駆動電圧Vsの制御は、図8に示す

$$\Delta V = \Delta V_s / \{1 + (C_f + C_p) / C_s\} \quad (3)$$

【0017】また、この信号変化量のダイナミックレンジΔViは下記のようになる。

$$\begin{aligned} \Delta V_i &= \Delta V_{MAX} - \Delta V_{MIN} \\ &= \Delta V_s / \{1 + (C_{fv} + C_p) / C_s\} \\ &\quad - \Delta V_s / \{1 + (C_{fr} + C_p) / C_s\} \end{aligned} \quad (4)$$

式（4）中のCfvは容量センサ素子11の容量Cfのうち指紋の凹部に相当する容量値、またCfrは容量センサ素子11の容量Cfのうち指紋の凸部に相当する容量値を示す。

【0018】駆動容量素子14は、半導体素子によっても実現でき、特に図3（b）に示すようにMOSトランジスタを図3（a）の駆動容量として用いることができる。図3（b）は、NMOSトランジスタの例であるが、センサ回路の電源電圧の極性が異なる場合はPMOSトランジスタを用いるようにすれば良い。さらに、MOSトランジスタのゲート端子を容量センサ素子11に接続し、ソース端子及びドレイン端子の電圧を制御することで、MOSトランジスタのソース端子及びドレイン

$$C_s = \{ (C_{fv} + C_p) (C_{fr} + C_p) \}^{1/2} \quad (5)$$

のときであり、このようにして駆動容量素子14の値Csを選定すればよい。

【0021】ここで、センサ電極のサイズは指紋のパターンとセンサ回路の感度から制限され、20μm角～100μm角程度になる。このときのCfrは20fF～350fF、Cfvは5fF以下、Cpは10fF～170fF程度になる。Cfvは小さいので5fFと固定して考えてもよく、CfrとCpを変化させた場合の駆動容量素子14の値Csの最適値は図5のようになる。以上のことから、駆動容量素子14の値Csは指紋の凹部の容量Cfv以下に設定すれば良い。

【0022】さらに、実際の製造では、Cp=Cfv／

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\*した従来の時間制御に比べて簡単かつ高精度で制御できる。

【0015】次に、図2を用い図1の信号発生回路15の信号発生方法について説明する。ここでは表面形状として指の表面を検出する場合について説明する。図2

（a）の時点①で制御信号Pの電位をHighレベルにしてスイッチSW1を閉じ外部電位Vpを節点N1にプリチャージする。その後、図2（a）の時点②で制御信号Pの電位をLowレベルにしてスイッチSW1を開放する。同時に図2（b）に示すように、信号発生回路15内の駆動容量素子14の駆動電圧VsをΔVsだけ低下させて節点N1の電荷を引き抜き、検出回路20側への入力信号を生じさせる。

【0016】ここで、プリチャージ電位をVp、容量センサ素子11の値をCf、寄生容量値をCp、駆動容量素子14の容量値をCs、駆動容量素子14の駆動電圧Vsの変化量をΔVsとすると、検出回路20側へ与えられる入力信号の変化量ΔVは、式（3）のようにな

★端子の寄生容量が容量センサ素子11に接続されることのない駆動容量素子14を実現できる。

【0019】式（4）に示すダイナミックレンジΔViは検出回路20への入力信号となるので大きいほどよい。ここで寄生容量値Cp=50fF、Cfv=10fF、Cfr=100fF、ΔVs=2.7VのときのダイナミックレンジΔViと駆動容量素子14の値Csとの関係を図4に示す。

【0020】図4において、ダイナミックレンジΔViが最大となる駆動容量素子14の値Csが存在し、この場合駆動容量素子14の値Csは約95fFである。上記の式（4）からダイナミックレンジΔViが最大になるのは駆動容量素子14の値Csが、

3、Cfv=Cfv／20と考えてよい。この場合、駆動容量素子14の値Csの最適値は約0.7Cfvとなる。この関係を図6に示す。したがって、駆動容量素子14の値CsはCfvの約0.7倍程度が最適であり、その範囲は、上記のCfvの範囲から10fF～250fF程度になる。このように、信号発生回路15では、電流源による電荷の引き抜きを行わずに、駆動容量素子14の充放電を利用して節点N1の電荷の引き抜きを行うようにしたため、電流源を多数のセンスユニットに内蔵してその電流量と電荷を引き抜く時間とを精度よく制御するといったようなことが不要になり、したがって簡単な構成でセンサ回路のセンシング精度を向上できる。



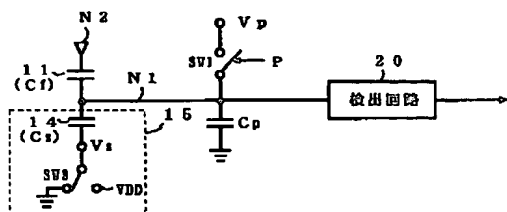
(5)

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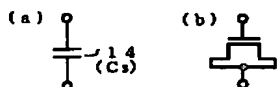
## 【0023】

【発明の効果】以上説明したように本発明によれば、接触した対象物の表面形状に応じて容量が変化する容量センサ素子、容量センサ素子の容量に応じた電圧信号を発生させる信号発生回路、容量センサ素子と信号発生回路との接続である節点に接続されて電圧信号を検出する検出回路を備えた表面形状認識用センサ回路において、信号発生回路を、第1及び第2の端子を有するとともに第1の端子が前記節点に接続される容量値 $C_s$ を有する容量素子から構成し、容量素子の第2の端子の電圧を第1の電位に設定するとともに、前記節点に電荷が充電された後に第2の端子を第2の電位に変化させて容量素子から電圧信号を発生させるようにしたので、電流源を多数のセンスユニットに内蔵して各電流源の電流量と電荷を引き抜く時間を精度よく制御することが回避され、したがってセンサ回路の検出精度を向上できる。また、このとき容量素子の第2の端子に印加する第1の電位を電源電位及びグランド電位の何れか一方に設定するとともに、前記第2の端子に印加する第2の電位を電源電位及びグランド電位の何れか他方に設定するようにしたので、第2の端子の電位を制御する場合、簡単な構成で制御できる。また、容量素子を、半導体素子から構成するとともに、上記半導体素子であるMOSトランジスタのゲート端子を第1の端子とし、かつこのトランジスタのソース端子及びドレイン端子を第2の端子とするようにしたので、精度の良い容量素子を作製できる。また、容量素子の第1の端子に発生する寄生容量値を $C_p$ 、容量センサ素子の最大及び最小の容量値をそれぞれ $C_{fv}$ 、 $C_{fr}$ としたとき容量素子の容量値 $C_s$ を、

【図1】



【図3】



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$\{(C_{fv} + C_p)(C_{fr} + C_p)\}^{1/2}$ に設定するようにしたので、表面形状として指紋の凹凸を検出する場合、指紋の凹部と凸部とを的確に識別できる。また、容量素子の容量値 $C_s$ を容量センサ素子の容量の最大値以下に設定するようにしたので、微細な凹凸を有する対象物の表面形状を精度良く検出できる。また、容量素子の容量値 $C_s$ を10 fFから250 fFまでの範囲としたので、精度の良い容量素子を容易に製造することができる。

## 10 【図面の簡単な説明】

【図1】 本発明に係る表面形状認識用センサ回路のブロック図である。

【図2】 図1のセンサ回路の動作状況を示すタイムチャートである。

【図3】 図1のセンサ回路を構成する信号発生回路内の駆動容量素子の例を示す図である。

【図4】 図1のセンサ回路の特性図である。

【図5】 図1のセンサ回路の特性図である。

【図6】 図1のセンサ回路の特性図である。

20 【図7】 従来のセンサ回路のブロック図である。

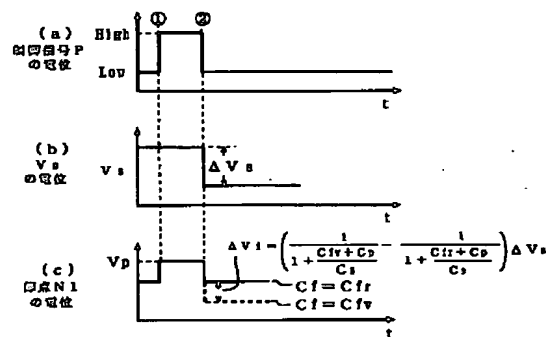
【図8】 図7のセンサ回路の動作状況を示すタイムチャートである。

【図9】 各センスユニットが格子状に形成されたセンサアレイを示す図である。

## 【符号の説明】

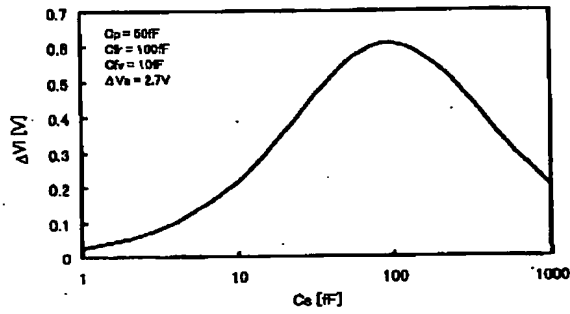
1…センスユニット、2…センサアレイ、3…指、11…容量センサ素子、14…駆動容量素子、15…信号発生回路、20…検出回路、SW1, SW3…スイッチ、 $C_p$ …寄生容量、N1, N2…節点、 $V_p$ …外部電圧。

【図2】

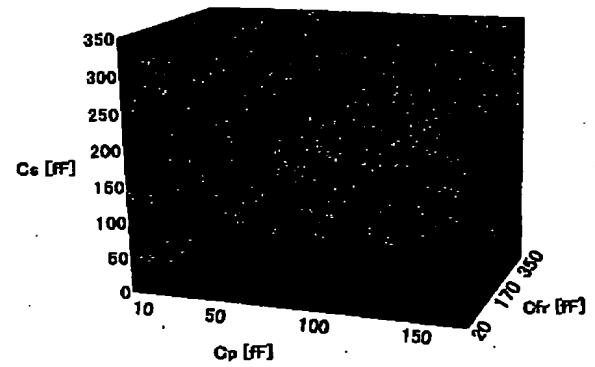


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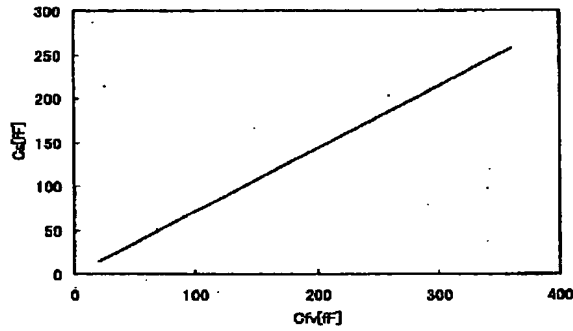
【図4】



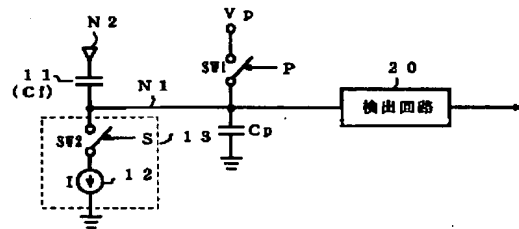
【図5】



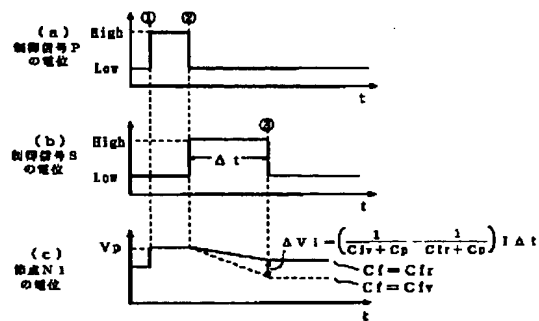
【図6】



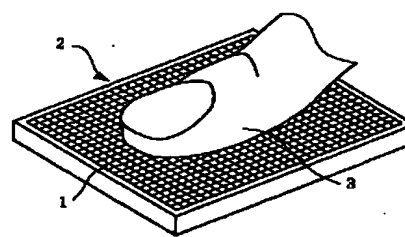
【図7】



【図8】



【図9】



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